

Letter from Eliza Symonds Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, January 21, 1877, with transcript

P. O. Box 518, Brantford, Ont., Can., Home, January 21st, 77. (No envelope)

According to promise, my dear boy, I proceed to give you the few items of domestic occurrences during the past week. First of all however I must write of your ankle for we are uneasy about it. I do not very well see how you can possibly keep as stationary as you ought. However we hope you will try, for remember how long Mrs. Roshell was a prisoner for want of sufficient care at first after a similar accident. Of course the Doctor has told you what to apply, but one of the very best remedies for a strain, is to wrap the parts in a wet cloth wrung out of Arnica water, a small teaspoonful of the tincture of Arnica, to a tumbler of water. Steep the whole of a handkerchief, and wrap the injured parts round and round, and then cover up with plenty of flannel. Do this when you go to bed. I have known it act upon a strain like magic. It once cured your grandpapa in one night, when he expected to have been laid up for a week. We have had letters both from Uncle Edward and Frances, written at Plymouth just before they embarked. The former was dated the 1st, of January and the latter the 3rd. They were to have gone on board at Gravesend but the weather was so dreadful that they preferred joining the ship at Plymouth. We cannot help feeling anxious about them for according to the papers the 2 weather at that time was terrific. I hope they will write from the Cape where they intend to land, I believe. Mr. Horne has either a brother or married sister living there, I don't know which. Your Uncle and also Frances speaks in very warm terms of the attention shown to them by Mr. and Mrs. Horne. Your Uncle seems to have a high opinion of Mr. H. which we are truly glad of for Sophie's sake. You know we never saw Mr. H. but I don't think he is a great favourite with his sisters-in-law. Both your Uncle and cousin were very sorry to leave London, and the latter tried very hard to be left behind for six months longer.

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I had a nice letter from Laurie a few days ago, she expressed great disappointment at not seeing you when she passed through Boston and hoped to have seen Mabel also. She asked if you ever got her telegram? I think you could not have left Brantford at the time. Lillie was very ill some days ago, but she is quite well now. Your Aunt was expected here for two or three days, as she was rather unwell, but she sent me word yesterday that her servant had given notice to quit on Tuesday 23rd, and a successor had not yet been found. We expect to receive a large sleighing party on Tuesday evening, unless a thaw should prevent. One is prophesied and there was the beginning of one this morning, but frost came on again in the Afternoon. We have not had so much snow about us since we came to Canada as now. I think I acknowledged in my last, the arrival of the Washington Examination— what is the conclusion of the matter?

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If you recollect 1872 was the year when Miss Dudley was with us, and your Father at Kingston. The end of 72 and the beginning of 73. We have ransacked every place for letters or charts for that time, but we have sent all that bear upon the subject. Of later dates, 75 and onward there are plenty. I owe Mabel a reply to her nice letter and pretty enclosure. It was very kind of her to think of me. Perhaps I may enclose one in this if I have time to write it, for I do not know her address. I send with this a "London Times" newspaper, that you may read an account of the floods in London and along the River Thames, at the end of last and the beginning of this month. I hope you have got all my letters. I sent three to Exeter Place (and three Globes) and two to Washington. The Globe for yesterday we have not yet got, as the weather was unfit for either the sleigh or buggy, and equally unfit for walking. Carrie and Co., we have heard nothing of since last I wrote. I forgot to tell you in its proper place, that in parting with your cousin Sophie, Frances said she felt as if she was parting with a Mother!! (2 o'clock)

I find I shall not be able to write to Mabel by this mail, as Papa walks into Town directly after dinner.

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The roads are still in the same state and the weather bitterly cold. The snow near the house is two feet deep and the lead on the roofs of the house and verandah is enormous. I don't know if we shall escape being drowned out when the thaw comes, but the walls of the bedrooms and even 4 in the drawing room are suffering from the partial thaw yesterday morning. Tell dear Mabel I am so glad you will not be deprived of her society yet awhile, and I hope she will exert her influence to keep you quiet! I shall write to her after tomorrow, when I can say how the sleighing party goes off, if the roads permit it to take place. With fond love my dear boy, from your Father and myself, and love also from your cousins, I am,

Your affectionate Mother, E. G. Bell. P.S. Papa says you will return the Missionary letter which I enclose. I also enclose Mr. Mc Lane's account.